

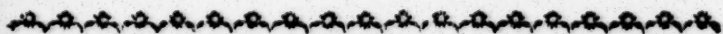
5
T H E
D E S E R T E R,

A
NEW MUSICAL-DRAMA,

As it is performed at the

T H E A T R E - R O Y A L

I N
D R U R Y - L A N E.



D U B L I N :

Printed for J. POTTS, D. CHAMBERLAINE,
W. SLEATER, R. MONCRIEFFE,
and T. WALKER.

MDCCLXXV.





TO THE PUBLIC.

LE DESERTEUR, is well known to have been these five years the most favourite Musical Piece on the French stage : so great indeed has been its success, that in this short time it has been translated into three languages ; one of which translations we have lately seen at the King's Theatre in the Hay-market, under the title of IL DESERTORE.

Indeed, when you once admit the circumstance of Henry's confessing himself a deserter, nothing can be more truly interesting than some of the incidents ; but yet they were brought about in a way peculiarly calculated for the French stage : the resolution of Henry was too sudden, too unprepared, as well as the circumstance of the mock-wedding that precedes it ; and throughout the piece there were a number of cold inanimating occurrences, that had very little, if any, relation to the main design ; and, add to this, it was never intended for an Opera, for the author himself calls it a Comedy interspersed with Songs.

It was thought, therefore, that if the unnecessary incidents were expunged, and those retained were rendered more probable ; if,

by making an uniform partition between the dialogue and the songs, it could be brought more to wear the complexion of an Opera, **THE DESERTER** might be entitled to a favourable reception on the English stage : how far these suggestions were reasonable, the public (who are the best judges, and by whose arbitration I shall always be proud to abide) will determine.

With regard to the Music, as I found it a work of great invention, I should have kept it in its original state, had it been possible ; but besides the excessive length of the songs, the continual breaks into recitative, the frequent sudden alterations of the stile, and above all, that sameness which so particularly characterizes the French Music, I found it much too grave to stand the least chance of success in an after-piece : I therefore selected what I thought the beauties ; and what I could not effect by having recourse to the original, I have endeavoured to supply myself.

In justice to the French composer, I think it absolutely necessary to declare, that the songs, beginning “ One conduct’s for both love and war ;” “ The nymph who in my bosom reigns ;” “ Mr. Simkin, I’d have you to know ;” and “ The whims of folks in love ;” are wholly my own ; and that the first air in the piece, and that beginning, “ My life’s three parts diminish’d,” are by
Philidor

Philidor, a name of no inconsiderable note in the musical world.

I have nothing to add but that I take this opportunity of making my acknowledgments to the performers for the support they were of to this piece ; I would, indeed, but that I despair of finding words worthy the occasion, express my gratitude to the public for their favourable reception of it.

C D I B D I N.

A 3

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

HENRY,	Mr. VERNON,
RUSSET,	Mr. BANISTER,
SIMKIN,	Mr. DIBDIN,
SKIRMISH,	Mr. PARSONS.
FLINT,	Mr. WRIGHT,
FIRST SOLDIER,	Mr. ACKMAN,
SECONDSOLDIER,	Mr. FAWCET,
THIRD SOLDIER,	Mr. KEAR,
FOURTHSOLDIER,	Mr. COURTNEY.

W O M E N.

LOUISA,	Mrs. SMITH.
JENNY,	Mrs. WRIGHTEN,
MARGARET,	Mrs. LOVE.

THE DESERTER.

ACT I.

SCENE I. A cottage, and a view of the
French camp at a distance.

Margaret knitting, and *Jenny* spinning, at the
door of the cottage; *Simkin*, and other villa-
gers, come on with baskets of fruit.

AIR I. *Simkin*.

I Can't, for my life, guess the cause of this fuss,
Why there's pipers and fiddlers; while *Robin*
and *Harry*,

And *Clodpole* and *Roger*, and ten more of us,
Have pull'd as much fruit as we're able to carry.

Margaret.

Why, numscull, that's nothing; her ladyship's wine,
All over the village, runs just like a fountain;
And I heard the folks say, every dish when they dine,
Will be swimming in claret, madeira, and mountain.

Jenny.

Then for poultry, and such like—good lord, what a
store!

I saw Goodman Gander six baskets full cramming;
Then such comforts and jellies! why one such feast more
Would certainly breed, in the village, a famine.

Chorus.

What the meaning can be,

We shall presently see,

For yonder's old *Russet*, who certainly knows;

But be what it will,

Our wish shall be still,

Joy and health to the *Duchess*, wherever she goes!

Sim.

8 THE DESERTER.

Sim. What can all this feasting be for ?

Jenny. I'll give you, while I wind up this bottom and another, and you shan't find it out.

Sim. Why then if you know so well, why don't you tell us what it is ?

Jen. Ah, I thought you would none of you guess it ; this grand feasting at the Duchess's is because the King's coming to the camp.

Marg. Who told you so ?

Jen. I had it from Gaffer Ruffet himself.

Sim. Does the King come to the camp to-day ?

Marg. Why yes, I knew that.

Sim. Then as sure as can be, I know what will happen.

Jen. why what will happen.

Sim. There will be two weddings in the village before to-morrow night.

Marg. How to ?

Sim. Why is not Henry, the young soldier, to marry Louisa, Gaffer Ruffet's daughter, as soon as the review is over ?

Jen. Not if I can prevent it.

Marg. Well, that's but one wedding !

Sim. Yes, but Jenny can tell you whose wedding t' other's to be.

Jen. How should I know ?

Sim. Ah, you wont say any thing before folks, because yo'ure a sham'd.

Jen. What do you mean ?

Sim. As if you did not know—

Jen. Not I indeed.

Sim. Why, did not you promise me, that when Henry married Louisa you'd marry me ?

Jen. Yes, yes, and I'll keep my word ; whenever Henry marries Louisa, I'll marry you.

S C E N E

THE DESERTER. 9

SCENE II.

Ruffet, Louisa, Simkin, Margaret, Jenny, and
Villagers.

A I R II Louisa.

Why must I appear so deceitful?

I cannot, dear father, comply :

Ah ! could I think him so ungrateful,

With anguish I surely should die.

What so tender, at parting, he told me,

With such joy to my bosom convey'd

When next he was doom'd to behold me,

Could I think would be this way repaid?

Ruf. Well, well, but child—

Lou. Indeed, father, 'tis impossible; I never can
consent to such a thing.

Ruf. Odds heart, Louisa, there's no harm in it.
Neighbours, come round here, I'll tell you the
whole affair; you know what a dear good lady the
Duchess is?

Marg. Ah, she's a dear good lady indeed, and
we all of us ought to do every thing she orders us.

Ruf. I and my family in particular ought, for
many's the good thing she has given me, and my
old dame; then how kind she was to all my poor
children! she stood god-mother to this, and had
her christened after her own name.

Sim. Louisa!

Ruf. Well, now we come to the point: Hen-
ry, you know, who was bred up with my girl,
and intended from his infancy for her husband, is
a soldier.

Sim. So he is.

Ruf. And because she has a value for every thing
that belongs to me, this good lady, about three
weeks ago, sent to the colonel for his discharge, that
the young folks may live at home at their ease, and
be as happy as the day is long.

Marg.

10 THE DESERTER.

Marg. That will be charming and comfortable for you, neighbour.

Ruf. Yes, but now comes the mischief of it ; what has occasion'd it, I dont know ; I never saw any harm of the lad, but there are always busy tongues in this village, doing people ill-offices ; and such reports, within these few days, have reached the Duchess's ears, that she is determined to see further into this business, before she gives Louisa the portion she promised her.

Jen. You may thank me for that.

Lou. But he'll be here to-day ; and so well I know his heart, that I am sure he'll clear himself to their confusion, who could so vilely traduce him.

Jen. Perhaps not.

Ruf. Well, child, I am sure you cant wish it more than I do ; nothing has ever pleased me so much as the thought of your coming together ; I wish to see you married with all my heart : for I shall then have nothing to do, but to listen to the prattle of your children, and prepare myself to follow poor Dorothy.

A I R III.

*My life's three parts diminish'd,
And when the sum is finish'd,
The parish-bell may toll,
Gra'mercy on my soul !*

Ding dong !

Swing swong !

*Methinks my old companions say,
That though his hairs are now grown grey,
Old Rustlet once, upon a day,
When all was mirth and jollity ;
When sports went round, and bells did ring,
Could briskly dance, and blythe could sing ;
And then upon the green to see
His rustic feats—'twas who but he !*

THE DESERTER. 11

*I'd give this bauble, life away,
Without a sigh, could I but stay,
To see a little infant care!
Like Henry brave, Louisa fair;
Could I see this, I'd yield content
A life I hope not badly spent.*

But as I was telling you, the Duchess hearing of these reports, is determined that we shall make a trial of his affections.

Lou. Indeed, father, there's no necessity for it; he loves me most sincerely.

Ruf. Nay, nay, child, I really think your love carries you away too much in this affair; it can do no harm; 'tis only an innocent frolick; you are to make believe as if you were a bride, and let me see who—oh, you shall be the bridegroom.

Sim. Shall I? I'cod I'm glad of that.

Ruf. But above all, I must instruct you, Jenny, in your part; you are to sit here, and tell Henry, when he comes, that Louisa and Simkin were married yesterday.

Jen. The very thing I wish'd.

Lou. I am vex'd to death that this trick should be played him: I can judge by myself what he'll feel: if I was told such a thing of him, how miserable I should be.

Ruf. But he'll be so much the happier, when he finds out the deceit, child.

A I R IV. *Louisa.*

*Though prudence may press me,
And duty distress me,
Against inclination, O, what can they do!
No longer a rover,
His follies are over,
My heart, my fond heart, says my Henry is true.*
The

12 THE DESERTER.

*The bee, thus as changing,
From sweet, to sweet ranging,
A rose should he light on, ne'er wishes to stray;
With raptures possessing,-
In one every blessing,*

'Till, torn from her bosom, he flies far away.

Ruf. Well, well, don't make yourself uneasy, I dare say he loves you as sincerely as you think he does; if so, he'll soon be undeceived, and we shall finish the day as happily as we could wish: in the mean time let us think of what we have to do; we are to pretend we came from the church; the fiddles and bagpipes are to go first, then the lads and lasses follow; after which, mind this now, we are to go to the Duchess's mansion in grand procession, and there to be feasted like so many princes and princesses.

Sim. P'cod that will suit me nicely.—But Gaffer Russet, Jenny says, you told her, the feasting was to be for the king.

Ruf. For us, and the king; yes, yes, the king after he and his courtiers have had an entertainment at the duchess's, goes to review the camp, where the soldiers are all to appear under arms.—Ah girls! that's what none of you know any thing about; when the king goes to the camp, then's the time—the drums beat—the fifes play—the colours are flying—and—and—Lord—Lord! what a charming thing war is.

Sim. It must be then when one comes home again, and its all over.

Ruf. There's no life like the life of a soldier: and then for love! let the girls take care of their hearts: I remember I won my Dorothy just after I came from such a review now as may be to-day.

Marg. Ah, indeed, the soldiers make sad work with young womens hearts sure enough.

Ruf. And how can it be otherwise?

A I R

THE DESERTER. 13
A I R V.

One conduct's for
Both love and war,
The point's to gain possession ;
For this we watch
The enemy's craft,
'Till we, sleeping catch
Them on their post :

Then good b'ye form,
The fort we storm,
And by these arts,
Make towns or hearts
Surrender at discretion.

In love the only battery,
Which with success we play
To conquer hearts, is flattery :
No fortress can its power withstand,
Neither cannons, mortars, sword in hand,
Can make such way.

As 'tis in love, so 'tis in war,
We make believe,
Mislead, deceive ;
Pray, what serve drums and trumpets for ?
Cannons, and all our force of arms ?
But with their thund'ring alarms,
To tell, not cover our designs ;
Can these to trenches, breaches, mines,
Blockades, or ambuscades, compare ?
No, all agree
That policy,
Is the true art militaire.

But come, come, we must go and prepare ourselves ; you have not much time to spare, and see where he comes hurrying a-long there ; there now he clammers up yonder hill—well done, faith !—Ah, your lovers have no gout to stop them. Come, child—neighbours come along.

Lou. Cruel father !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Henry. *Afterwards, in the wedding procession, Ruffet, Simkin, Louisa, Margaret, Jenny and Villagers.*

A I R VI. Henry.

*The nymph, who in my bosom reigns,
With such full force my heart enchains,
That nothing ever can impair,
The empire she possesses there.*

*Who digs for stones of radiant ray,
Finds baser matter in his way ;
The worthless load he may condemn,
But prizes still and seeks the gem.*

But I hear music, what can this be ? All the villagers are coming this way—it seems like a wedding—I'll retire—How I envy this couple !

Ruf. Charming ! He has hid himself—pretend not to see him—don't turn your head that way—he's looking at you now !

Lou. How cruel not to let me have one look !

Sim. No, you must look at no-body but me now ; I am the bridegroom, you know.

Ruf. Jenny, be sure you play your part well.

Jen. Never fear me—My part is a much more difficult one than they imagine.

SCENE IV.

Jenny, who sits down to spinning ; and Henry, who comes forward during her song.

A I R VII. Jenny.

*Some how my spindle I mislaid,
And lost it underneath the grass ;
Damon advancing, bow'd his head,
And said what seek you pretty lass ?
A little love, but urg'd with care,
Oft leads a heart and leads it far.*

'Twas

'Twas passing nigh yon spreading oak,
That I my spindle lost just now;
His knife then kindly Damon took,
And from the tree he cut a bough.
A little love, &c. &c.

Thus did the youth his time employ,
While me he tenderly beheld;
He talk'd of love, I leap'd for joy,
For, ah! my heart did fondly yield.
A little love, &c. &c.

Hen. Good day, young woman.

Jen. [*Sings*] 'Twas passing nigh, &c.

Hen. Young woman!

Jen. [*Sings*] 'Twas passing nigh, &c.

Hen. Pray tell me what wedding that is?

Jen. What! that wedding?

Hen. Yes.

Jen. Do you want to know whose wedding it is?

Hen. Ay, ay.

Jen. What, that wedding that went past?

Hen. Yes, yes.

Jen. Why, 'tis a wedding in the village here.

Hen. But whose, I ask you?

Jen. [*Sings.*]

Hen. Are you making a jest of me? answer me, I beg of you.

Jen. Why I do answer you, don't I?

Hen. What, again! Whose is this wedding? Whose is it? Speak, or I'll—did not I see amongst them?—distraction!—will you answer, you?

Jen. Lord, you are so impatient! why then the wedding is Louisa's, old Russet's daughter, the invalid soldier.

Hen. Louisa's wedding!

Jen. Yes, she was married yesterday.

Hen. Married! good heavens! Are you sure of what you say? Do you know Russet?

16 THE DESERTER.

Jen. Do I know him? to be sure I do. Why he is bailiff to the Duchess. What makes you so uneasy you seem as if you had an interest in it.

Hen. An interest in it! Oh!

Jen. Dear me, if I remember right, you are the young man that every body thought she'd be married to: O law! what wickedness there is in this world! I am sure I very sincerely pity you.

Hen. I'm obliged to you for your concern.

Jen. Nay, it is not more upon your account than my own, that I am uneasy.

Hen. How so.

Jen. Why she was not content with making you miserable, but she must make me so too: the vile wretch she's married to, has perjur'd himself; for he has sworn a thousand and a thousand times to marry me.

Hen. What falsehood and treachery!

Jen. If I was you I would not bear it quietly; not but she'd brazen it all out; for I taxed her with it myself, and she only laughed in my face, and told me that you and I might go and mourn together, like two turtles, the loss of our mates.

Hen. Insulting creature!

Jen. Yes, and for my part I said to myself, says I, 'twould be a good joke to take her at her word; but then again I thought that though revenge is sweet, yet people have their likings, and their dislikes; and as for me, to be sure, I can't pretend to such a good young man as you.

Hen. [*not regarding her*] Infamous wretch! well might she keep her eyes fix'd upon the ground; but I'll see her, upbraid her with her infidelity and leave her to the guilty reproaches of her own ungrateful heart.

Jen. Young man—

Hen. [*Returning*] Well what do you say?

Jen. I believe you did not rightly hear what I said

Hen. Oh! I have no time for trifling.

SCENE V.

Jenny, Simkin.

Jen. Poor soul! how he takes it to heart; but I must follow him; for if I lose this opportunity, I may not find it so easy to get another. But, stay, upon second thoughts, if I can but make a tool of Simkin, and by that means alarm Louisa, I shall every way gain my ends; for if she once believes him capable of slighting her, I am sure she has too much spirit ever to see him again.

Sim. Oh, Jenny, I am glad I have found you; what do you think brought me away from Louisa and them?

Jen. I neither know nor care.

Sim. Why? I was afraid you'd be jealous.

Jen. I jealous!

Sim. Why yes, you know, because I pretended to be Louisa's husband.

Jen. No, I'd have you to know, I am not jealous; I am only vex'd to think I have been such a fool, to listen to you so long, you base creature, you!

Sim. If I did not think there was something the matter, by your looking so cross.

Jen. And enough to make one; you know I can't help loving you, and this is the way you return my affection.

Sim. Why you know it was only in play.

Jen. In play—I could see plain enough, how your eyes sparkled upon the bare mention of being the bridegroom.

Sim. Now, Jenny if you would but hear me speak.

Jen. Speak! get out of my sight, you perjured wretch! I was fool enough not to credit what I heard of you, but I dare say 'tis all true.

Sim. Why, what did you hear of me?

18 THE DESERTER

Jen. 'That it was you who invented all these reports about Henry.

Sim. Me! as I am a living Christian, Jenny—

Jen. Don't say a word to me, you have made me miserable, and now you want to insult me.

Sim. Indeed I don't; you can't think now, how happy I could make you, if you would only hear me three words—

Jen. Don't talk to me of happiness, for I never shall be happy again as long as I live.

Sim. How dearly she loves me! what a pity it is she won't let me clear up this affair.

Jen. And then that demure little minx; oh, I could tear her eyes out; I was always afraid of it and now I am convinc'd that her pretended love for Henry, was nothing but a contrivance to blind me the easier.

Sim. Dear, dear—

Jen. But, however, you have both miss'd your aim, for Henry behaves as he ought to do, and holds her arts in contempt; nay, he told me himself he had fix'd his affections upon a more worthy object.

Sim. He did!

Jen. Yes, he did, and you may go and tell her so, and as for me,

A I R VIII.

Mr. Simkin, I'd have you to know,

That for all your fine airs,

I'm not at my last pray'rs,

Nor put to it so,

That of course I must take up with you;

For, I really Sir, think, that tho' husbands are few

I need not go far off to seek,

For a better than you any day of the week.

To be sure, I must own, I was foolish enough,

To believe all the tenderness, nonsense, and stuff,

Which for ever you dinn'd in my ears;

And

THE DESERTER 19

*And when for a while you've been out of my sight,
The day has been comfortless, dreary the night,
And my only companions my tears ;
But now that's all o'er,
I hate you, despise you, will see you no more.*

SCENE VI.

Sim. Why, what the duce has got hold of her ?
for my share, I believe all the folks in our village
are gone mad—mad ! I'cod, I'll be hang'd if any
Bedlamites are half so mad as folks in love.

AIR IX.

*The whims of folks in love to know,
I believe would fairly pose Old Nick :
This moment fast—next moment slow,
Now consenting,
Now repenting,
Nor at this, or that will stick ;
But changing still,
They won't—they will—
When they mean Yes, they'll answer No ;
And fume and fret,
This hour to get
What they dislike'd an hour ago.*

*If you expect to find them here,
T'other side they quickly were ;
The wind and tide,
In the same mode will longer bide :
Like two fond turtles, side by side,
This hour they woo,
And bill and coo !
Then, by and by,
No reason why,
They make the devil and all to do !*

SCENE VII.

A party of Soldiers, afterwards Henry.

I Sold. I'll tell you, my boys, how the matter
stands ; if we can but catch hold of him, the *summum*
bonum

20 THE DESERTER.

bonum of the thing is this, he'll be first try'd and then shot.

2 *Sold.* Yes, but suppose we don't catch hold of him?

3 *Sold.* Why then he'll neither be tried nor shot.

4 *Sold.* No more he won't

2 *Sold.* But I have been thinking how we shall do to know him.

1 *Sold.* Ay, you are a fool in these matters, I'll tell you how you'll know him; here! here! I've got his name and his marks [*Reading*] Hanibal Firebrand, six foot and an inch high, of an orange tawny complexion, a Roman nose, and the letters R. T. burned in the palm of his hand; the devil's in it if we can miss him.

3 *Sold.* Well, but you need not have taken all this pains, for you know he was your pot companion.

1 *Sold.* Faith I forgot that.

2 *Sold.* And would you go for to lift your hand against your friend?

1 *Sold.* Against my friend! ay, against my father, if he was to desert; but stay, stand by, perhaps this is he! [*They draw back*]

Hen. Where shall I fly? the unhappy have no friends; all I meet make a scoff of my sufferings.

2 *Sold.* It must be him.

1 *Sold.* Keep back.

Hen. Are the inhabitants of this place turned brutes? have they no compassion?

1 *Sold.* There, you see how it is, none of the people will screen him, they are honest, and refuse to do it? I'll take care the king shall know what good subjects he has.

Hen. At my home, where I expected to receive so kind a welcome, I am surrounded with enemies.

1 *Sold.* There! there! he says he expected to receive so kind a welcome from the enemy.

2 *Sold.*

THE DESERTER 21

2 *Sold.* So he does.

Hen. To desert one so kind.

1 *Sold.* Ah! 'twas an infamous thing of you sure enough.

Hen. Life is not worth keeping upon such terms, and this instant could I lay it down with pleasure.

1 *Sold.* Mark that!

Hen. I'll go directly, and—

1 *Sold.* (*Stopping him*) Not so fast, if you please hey! why, this is not the deserter, that's my friend; but no matter, one deserter's as good as another.

Hen. Do you suspect me for a deserter.

1 *Sold.* No, we don't suspect you; we know you for one.

Hen. Me!

1 *Sold.* Me! yes you! how strange you make of this matter; why, did we not hear you confess that you expected a kind welcome from the enemy? I'll tell you what, I am not fond of making people uneasy, but every word you have uttered will be a bullet in your guts.

Hen. What if I favour this, and so get rid of all my woes at once—Oh! Louisa, you have broke my heart.

1 *Sold.* What are you talking to yourself about; Come, come, you are a deserter, and must go with us.

Hen. Shall I or not?—by heav'n, I will—I own it, I am a deserter—lead me where you please.

1 *Sold.* There, he confesses it, and we shall have the reward.

A I R X. Henry.

*I'll fly these groves, this hated shade,
Each sound I hear, each thing I see,
Remind me, thou perfidious maid!*

Of vows so often made by thee.

*Blush! blush, Louisa! and look there,
Where's now thy truth? oh! tell me where?*

Thy

THE DESERTER.

*Thy constancy's no more ;
And like a wretch, by tempest tost.
My peace is gone, nay, hope is lost,
I sink in sight of shore !*

First and second Soldier.

Come, brother, come,

Third and Fourth Soldier.

We must begone.

Henry.

Yes, yes, I'll fly to death—lead on
First, Second, Third, and Fourth Soldier.
Come then.

Henry.

And yet, O cruel fate.

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Soldier.
He is devilish loth.

Henry.

A minute stay,

One instant e're I'm drag'd away.

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Soldier,
You have confess'd—'tis now too late.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

A Prison, a table, and some old chairs; Flint, who while he speaks puts the stage in order, Henry walks about disturbed; and afterwards Skirmish, who comes on, as Flint goes off the stage.

Fli. **T**HERE's some water for you to drink ;
a table and a chair, and yonder's your
bed ; but if you go on at the rate you have begun
there will be no great trouble in making it—I
am a deserter, *I have* deserted ; I believe you'll
find, you had better not confess'd quite so soon :—
why what a devil of a fellow you must be. But,
come, as I said before, there's some water for you,
and if you chuse to have any thing better—for mo-
ney, d'ye see—you understand me right—for mo-
ney

THE DESERTER. 23

ney—and faith, if you have any, you have no great reason to be sparing of it, for, I believe, your business will soon be settled.—Do you chuse any wine?

Hen. No, no,

Fli. Well, very well; if you won't have wine, you must drink water.

Hen. False, false, Louisa!—Oh, heaven!

Fli. But you seem a little down in the mouth about this business; never mind it, 'twill soon be over; you are to suffer at five; in the mean time I'll send a lodger of mine to you, he'll put you in spirits, by that you have drank a glass together; his name is Skirmish; he's a devilish hearty fellow.
[*Goes off.*]

Hen. That a few hours should sink me from the expectation of so much happiness to this abyss of misery! Perfidious woman.

Skir. Here, my boy, who wants me? who calls for Skirmish? Comrade, did you want me?

Hen. Me! no.

Skir. Why, yes you did. Ho, ho, house! here house! we'll have a glass together; as we never saw one another before, we'll now begin to renew our acquaintance.

Hen. Can you tell me, if I could get a sheet of writing paper.

Skir. Yes, surely, you shall have that: here house! house, I say! where the devil are you all? But heark'ee friend! what a confounded mistake you have made here! A mistake! damme, you you have made two mistakes! I can prove it: In the first place, to desert at all was a mistake; then to confess it, Oh, damn it, that was a mistake indeed! I am but a silly ignorant fellow; but had I been in your place, had he been my serjeant, my general, nay, my corporal, I would have said, No, I am no deserter. No, no my lad, Skirmish scorns to desert.

A I R

A I R XI.

*Though to have a bout at drinking,
When I hear the glass'es chinking.
There's nothing but I'd do, or say,
Yet Skirmish ne'er shall run away.*

*For here is his motto, and so there's an end:
He's none of your flatt'ers, who fawn and are civil
But for country, his bottle, his king or his friend,
Little Skirmish would go half-way to the devil.*

*Soldiers often fickle prove,
Who can know his mind for ever?
We forgive you false in love,
But Deserters never, never.*

S C E N E II.

*Henry, Louisa, Skirmish, who goes off returns,
and goes off again during the Scene, and Flint with
wine, who goes off immediately after he has spoke.*

Fli. There's a young woman without asking for
a soldier [*to Skirmish*] I suppose it must be you she
wants.

Skir. Yes, yes its me I warrant you; let her
come in, but give me the wine though [*sets the
bottle down on seeing her*] Ah, ah, a smart wench
faith!

Hen. Good heavens! what do I see? You here

Lou. Me, Henry!

Hen. Is it possible!

Skir. Oh, oh, I smoke this business; comrade
I'm off, I'm off; she's your sister, I suppose, or
your cousin but that's no business of mine; madam
no offence I hope; my name is Skirmish, I un-
derstand what good breeding is; I'm off; brother
soldier, faith she's a fine girl, I'll go and walk a
little in the court yard d'ye mind me, I'm off—
mum.

Hen. This insult is beyond enduring!—Is it not
enough?—but I will not upbraid you.

Lou.

Lou. Hear me but a moment!

Hen. Away! don't I know you false?—barbarous, faithless wretch!

Skir. [Coming on] Don't mind me; don't let me disturb you; I only come to fetch the wine, for I believe you don't care to drink; will you take a sup? no—well, your servant—I'm off again.

Hen. It is not from your hands, but from your father's that I shall expect——

Lou. 'Tis true, my father!

Hen. That infamous old man! but go—I have no more to say. Oh, Louisa! I dote upon you still! is it possible you can intirely have forgot me?

Lou. Believe me, Henry!

Hen. But with what assurance!—what composure!

Lou. I should not be compos'd, if I was really to blame.

Hen. O thou perfidious woman!

Lou. Enjoy your error.

Hen. My error?

Lou. With one word I could convince you.

Hen. With one word! speak it then if you dare.

Lou. I am not married then.

Hen. Not married!

Lou. 'Twas entirely my father's doings; his scheme to——

Hen. O cruel! 'tis to no purpose whether 'twas you or him.

Lou. The Duchefs—

Hen. Don't name her; you dare not shew yourself to her.

Lou. 'Twas her who order'd the whole affair.

Hen. How!

Lou. What I tell you is true; some reports to your disadvantage having recah'd her, which I then knew, and we have since found to be false, she ordered this mock-wedding (for such only it was) to

prove your affections ; so that every thing you saw and heard was contrived on purpose to deceive you, and the whole affair was but a joke ?

Hen. [*Sitting down in the chair, rests his hand on the table*] Was but a joke ?

A I R XII. *Louisa.*

*Ah ! cease this affliction, your troubles are past,
Of care and disquiet, that sigh was your last :*

*How could you once harbour a doubt of my love ?
The girl you convers'd with, the feast and the rest
The mifick and dancing was all but a jest,*

*A frolick design'd your affections to prove.
Believe me, Louisa reluctant comply'd,*

*Her father commanded—intreaty was vain ;
Or I swear by this hand I would rather have dy'd,
Than have given my Henry a moment of pain.*

Hen. Oh, heavens ! my heart will burst.

Lou. What means this grief, my love ? do you still doubt the truth of what I say ?

Hen. No, Louisa ; 'tis because I believe you.

Lou. Here's my father. Oh, Sir ! I am glad you are come. Ask him what's the matter ; make him tell the cause of his distress.

Ruf. Henry, my dear boy, good day to you ; I am overjoy'd to see you ; well, all matters are clear'd up, and you may take Louisa for your pains, when ever you will, I give her to you.

Hen. I beseech you, desire your daughter to step into the court-yard for a minute or two.

Ruf. Why so ?

Hen. Oblige me ; only desire she will.

Ruf. Louisa, we have something to say to each other ; step out for a minute or two, I'll call you back presently.

Hen. [*Taking her hand as she goes out.*] Louisa, 'tis an age since I saw you last.

Lou. And yet you send me away from you already.

Hen. You shall come back again immediately.

Ruf. I was surpris'd to hear you was put in prison, though they tell me 'tis but for a trifle. I am

overjoy'd to see you ; the Duchefs will soon get you releas'd, and then—but you seem thoughtful.

Hen. Will you promise me to do whatever I request.

Ruf. That I will, provided it is in my power.

Hen. I beg you to take your daughter away with you ; we must take leave of one another.

Ruf. Why I know that, don't I ? you must go back to your regiment.

Hen. Well, return hither two days hence, and ask for a dragoon, named Skirmish, he will deliver you a letter—and for me—

Ruf. O I know well enough what you mean ; you'll be at the camp, the king's to be there.

Hen. Have you command enough of yourself not to betray any thing to your daughter of what I am going to tell you ?

Ruf. To be sure I have.

Hen. I'm afraid she'll return before—

Ruf. [*Looking out.*] No, no, we're very safe.

Hen. This wedding trick—

Ruf. Yes, 'twas I manag'd it.

Hen. It threw me into despair—

Ruf. Good ! very good ! I knew it would.

Hen. And in my fury—

Ruf. Ha, ha, ha, what you was furious then ? delightful !

Lou. [*Running in*] O cruel father ! O unfortunate accident ! this wedding has undone us all ; he has confess'd himself a Defenter, and is condemn'd to suffer death.

Ruf. What's this I hear ?

Hen. She knows it all—O torture !

Ruf. A defenter ! condemn'd ! Henry can this be as she says ?

Hen. 'Tis but too true.

Ruf. Good heavens !

Fli. You are wanted without.

THE DESERTER.

Hen. Me?

Fli. You—you must go directly.

Hen. Adieu, Louisa!

A I R XIII.

Henry.

*Adieu! Adieu! my heart will break,
This torment's beyond bearing:*

Louisa.

*Adieu! ah, why? my love, oh? speak,
And banish this despairing.
Give thy Louisa's pangs relief.*

Henry.

I cannot speak, oh, love! oh, grief!

Henry, Louisa, and Russet.

*Ye pitying pow'rs! some comfort send:
When will our sorrows have an end?*

Lou. For heav'n's sake, Sir! where is he gone,
who wants him?

Fli. Only some friends.

Lou. Surely, it can't be to——

Fli. Oh, no! 'tis not for that yet—'tis too soon
——a while, about five or six—perhaps it may be
seven first.

Lou. Oh, support me, Sir!

Rus. No child, we may yet prevent it. I'll go
to the duchess, and tell her the whole affair.

Lou. She has brought me into this trouble.

Rus. I'll seek her this instant, do you follow me.
[goes off.]

Lou. Oh, Sir! on my knees I beseech you.

Fli. There's no occasion for kneeling to me;
what would you have?

Lou. Is not the king to be at the camp to-day?

Fli. Yes, and what then?

Lou. Tell me, Sir, in such a case, 'tis an act of
justice; the king surely will do justice.

Fli. Certainly; he never does otherwise.

Lou. Alas, Sir, I am poor, so very poor——

Fli.

THE DESERTER. 29

Fli. That won't hinder it a bit ; the king's too good to despise folks because they are poor.

Lou. But 'tis for you I mean.

Fli. For me ?

Lou. To thank you with ; to intreat you ; here is a small ornament, of no great value indeed ; I give you this, Sir, I wish I had more to give ; 'tis silver ; delay it but till to-morrow.

Fli. Do what, delay it ! [*looking at the trinket*] hey ! it seems to me to be hollow : are you sure 'tis silver ?

Lou. This suspence is dreadful. [*Goes off.*]

Fli. Why, I'll tell you ; I cant absolutely delay his execution : but I'll let him have as much wine as ever he can drink :—what gone !—Gad, this girl has a generous spirit.

SCENE IV.

Skirmish, who holds a bottle and glass in one hand, a sheet of paper under his arm, and with the other drags in Simkin.

Skir. Come along, what the devil are you afraid of ? here's a young man wants to see this soldier and the girl that was here : where are they ? [*to Flint.*]

Fli. She's gone away.

Skir. But, where's he ?

Fli. He was sent for-out to some friends, he'll be here again.

Sim. If you please, Sir, I'll follow the gentleman.

Skir. You and I must take a glass together.—So this soldier is your cousin, is he ?

Sim. Yes, Sir.

Skir. Sit yourself down then, and he was sent here yesterday ?

Sim. Yes, Sir.

Skir. Well then, sit down, I tell you.

Sim. But Sir.

Skir. Sit down, I say ; sit down there ;—hell and fury, will you sit down when I bid you ?

there!—now we'll take a glass together; he'll soon be here; come fill.

Sim. Sir, I thank you, but I am not dry; besides I don't care much for drinking, without knowing my company.

Skir. Without knowing your company! why, you little starv'd sniveling—an't you in company with a gentleman? but drink this minute, or I'll—

Sim. I will, Sir if you won't be angry.

Skir. Not I; I wont be angry: so you say that—

Sim. I, Sir I did not say any thing

Skir. Well then, if you did not say any thing, sing—sing me a song.

Sim. I am not in spirits for singing.

Skir. Spirits! why, a song will raise your spirits; come, sing away.

Sim. But Sir, I can't sing.

Skir. Ever while you live, sing.

Sim. Indeed, Sir I can't.—

Skir. You can't—why, then I will.

Sim. Well, but, Sir.

Skir. Sit still, I tell you; I am going to sing.

Sim. But—I wish you, cousin—

Skir. He can't be long now; hear my song.

A I R XII.

Women and wine compare so well,

They run in a perfect parrallel;

For women bewitch us when they will,

And so does wine;

They make the statesman lose his skill,

The soldier, lawyer, and divine,

They put strange whims in the gravest skull,

And send their wits to gather wool;

Then since the world thus runs away,

And women and wine,

Are alike divine;

Let's love all night, and drink all day!

There's

THE DESERTER 31

There's something like a song for you! now we'll sing together.

Sim. Together?

Skir. Ay, both together.

Sim. But, Sir, I don't know your song.

Skir. Why, who the devil wants you to sing my song?

Sim. I never saw such a man in my life: how shall I get away from him?—Sir!

Skir. Weil, what d'ye say?

Sim. I believe there's somebody looking for you yonder.

Skir. Is there?

[While Skirmish looks round, Simkin takes an opportunity of running off.]

Skir. O, you young dog! I'll be after you; but stay here comes the poor unfortunate young man his cousin.

SCENE V.

Henry, Skirmish

Skir. How are your spirits? take a sup of this: Oh! here's your writing paper.

Hen. Thank you, friend; oh, my heart! I wish I could have seen Louisa once more.

[Sits down to write.]

Skir. Ah, your'e a happy man, you can write!
[Loud] Oh, my cursed stars, what a wretched fellow I am!

Hen. Why, what's the matter? *[Looking round]*

Skir. The matter?—Confusion!—I blush to say it; but since it must out, what will you say to such a poor, miserable—and but this one misfortune, fit to be a general: if I had known how to write, I might have had a regiment five years ago; but company is the ruin of us all; drinking with one, and drinking with another;—why, none here; I was in hopes *here* that I shou'd be able to study a little; but the devil a bit; no such thing as getting the bottle out of one's hand: ah! if I

32 THE DESERTER.

could hold the pen as I have held the bottle, what a charming hand I should have wrote by this time.

Hen. Skirmish, do me one favour?

Skir. What is it?

Hen. May I depend upon you?

Skir. To the last drop of my blood.

Hen. Promise me to deliver this letter.

Skir. I'll go directly.

Hen. You can't go with it now; you are a prisoner, you know.

Skir. Damn it, so I am; I forgot that: well. but to-morrow I shall have my liberty, and then—

Hen. A person, whose name is Ruffet, will be here to enquire after me, deliver it to him.

Skir. May I perish, if I fail.

Hen. Let me speak to you. [*They talk apart.*]

S C E N E VI.

Henry, Skirmish, Margaret, Jenny, and Simkin.

Mar. Yes, yes, you vile hussy, 'twas all your fault.

Jen. Well, have not I confess'd it?

Mar. Confess'd it, indeed! is not the poor young man going to lose his life, and all upon your account?

Jen. I own it, I own it; I never shall 'joy myself again as long as I live; I shall see his ghost every night.

Sim. And it serves you right; and I'll tell you more news for your comfort; I would not marry you now you've been so wicked, if you was worth your weight in gold.

Mar. Ah you need not talk; for you know well enough, you was told to run after him to call him back and you never once offered to move.

Sim. Why how could I? I was the bridegroom, you know.

Jen. See, there he is!

Mar. Bless us, how alter'd he looks!

Hen.

THE DESERTER 33

Hen. Good day, aunt ; good day ; [*to the others.* give us leave, brother soldier.

Skir. Yes, yes, I'll go ; I wont disturb you ; I'll go and see what they are doing ; I am afraid no good, for the time draws near.

Mar. Ah my poor boy ! can you forgive us ? 'twas all our doing.

Jen. No, 'twas my doing.

Hen. Let us say no more about it ; it was an unfortunate affair : where's Louisa, and her father ?

Mar. Ah ! poor man ! her father came running into the village, like one distracted ; flung himself on the ground, tore his hair ; we could not get him to speak to us.

Hen. And Louisa, who has seen her ?

Sim. We none of us can tell where she is.

Hen. How ! no one know where she is gone ? some accident sure has happened to her ?

Mar. Don't afflict yourself so.

Hen. Aunt, if she is found I must rely on you to comfort her, don't suffer her out of your sight ; this is now all the service you can do me ; your nephew must die ; for my sake, therefore, look upon her as your niece ; she should have been so in reality.

Marg. I promise you.

Hen. I could wish to see her again.

S C E N E, *the last*

Henry, Margaret, Jenny, Simkin, Flint, Skirmish and Soldiers.

Fli. Comrade, I am sorry to bring you bad news but you must now behave yourself like a man ; the hellhounds are coming for you.

Hen. Already ?

Skir. They are, indeed ; here, here, you've occasion enough for it ; drink some of this.

Hen. I am obliged to you,—none. Aunt, adieu,
tell

34 THE DESERTER.

tell my Louisa, I thought on her to my last moment ; and, oh, my heart bear up a little, and I shall be rid of this insupportable misery.

A I R XIII.

*To die, is nothing ; it is our end, we know ;
But 'tis a sure release from all our woe ;
'Tis from the mind to set the body free,
And rid the world of wretched things like me.*

*A thousand ways our troubles here increase ;
While care succeeding care, destroys our peace ;
Why fly we then ? what can such comfort give ?
We cease to suffer, when we cease to live.*

*[During the song a messenger comes on
and talks with Flint.]*

Marg. Oh, Lord, what shall we do ? I'd give all I have in the world to prevent it.

Sim. And for me, I'd part with the very cloaths off my back.

Jen. If you could but see Louisa !

Marg. Ay, if you could but see Louisa !

Jen. We'll give you fir, all the money we have, if you'll only stay till we fetch the young woman, that was here just now.

Fli. Well, I am sure nobody can say, but as how I am always ready to serve every body I can :— what have you got ?

Marg. Why, here's a little piece of gold, and some silver.

Jen. And here's my little stock ; I am sure every farthing.

Sim. And there's all mine.

Fli. Well Good nature is my pride and pleasure ; are you sure you have given me all ?

Marg. I am sure I have.

Jen. And so have I.

Sim. And I too, indeed.

Fli.

THE DESERTER. 35

Fli. Why then what signifies hiding good news, the young man's repriev'd.

Hen. How?

Fli. Here's a messenger from the camp?

Hen. Let me sit down.

Marg. I shall die with pleasure.

Sim. Lord, lord, I shall leap out of my skin.

Ruf. Where is he? where's my boy, my son? Louisa, Henry has done it all! Louisa has sav'd your life!

Hen. Charming angel! tell me how, dear Sir?

Ruf. As the army were returning to the camp, assisted in her resolution by her love for you, to the astonishment of all who saw her, she rush'd like lightning through the ranks, made her way to the king himself, fell at his feet,—and, after modestly relating the circumstances of thy innocence, and her own distress, vow'd never to rise till she obtain'd the life of her lover: the king, having heard her story with that clemency which always accompanies a noble mind, granted thy life to her intercession; and the pomp pass'd on amidst the acclamations of the people.

Hen. Charming generous creature!

Skir. Death and damnation!

Fli. Why, what ails you, Skirmish?

Skir. The king at the camp, and I not there!

Sim. I shall love my cousin Louisa for it as long as I live.

Ruf. The king wept, and the nobles fill'd her lap with money, which she threw to the ground, least it should retard her in her way to you.

Hen. How can I reward such tenderness?

Ruf. See, see, here she comes.

Lou. My Henry!

[Falling into his arms.]

Hen. My Louisa!

A I R

Henry.

*My kind preserver fain I'd speak,
 Fain would I what I feel express;
 But language is too poor, too weak,
 To thank this goodness to express;
 Brothers, companions, age and youth;
 Oh! tell to all the world her fame,
 And when they ask for faith and truth,
 Repeat my dear Louisa's name.*

Louisa.

*And have I sav'd my Henry's life?
 Dear father, in my joy take part:
 I now indeed shall be a wife,
 Wife to the idol of my heart.
 Thus when the storm, dispersing flies,
 Through which the sailor's forc'd to steer;
 No more he dreads inclement skies,
 But with the tempest leaves his fear.*

Russet.

*Why, why, I pray you this delay?
 Children your hands in wedlock join,
 That I may pass my hours away,
 In ease and peace through life's decline:
 This joy's too great my pride, my boast;
 Both, both in my affection share,
 May who delights the other most.
 Henceforward be your only care.*

Skirmish

*I wish your joy may hold you long;
 But yet I am not such a sot,
 As not to see you all are wrong;
 Why is the king to be forgot?
 You had been wretched but for him;
 Then follow Skirmish, dance and sing;
 Raise ev'ry voice, strain ev'ry limb,
 Huzza, and cry, Long live the King!*

F I N I S.

